

## Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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ACDA-10 OMB-01 /095 W

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O R 261449Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 2564

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: APRIL 25-26 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORTING ON LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: PRINCIPAL MEDIA THEMES PAST TWO DAYS INCLUDE:  
EMPHASIS UPON SIGNING OF CONSTITUTIONAL SMAENDMENT AS CLEARING  
PATH FOR REVIEWED MOVEMENT ON POLITICAL TRACK; IMPROVING SECUR-  
ITY SITUATION; CRITICISM OF JUMBLATT'S PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL  
ADMINISTRATION IN SOME LEBANESE DISTRICTS; AND FOREIGN AND  
DOMESTIC SUPPORT FOR ASAD'S POLICIES IN LEBANON. SOME COLUMNISTS  
EXPRESSED STATISFACTION WITH TANGIBLE PROGRESS ACHIEVED SO FAR  
BY SYRIAN EFFORTS, BUT TISHRIIN CONTINUED TO HAMMER AWAY  
AT U.S. ROLE IN LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

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2. APRIL 25 RADIO REPORTED SIGNING OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

BY FRANGIEH AND CALL FOR PARLIAMENT MEETING TO SET DATE FOR ELECTION OF FRANGIEH'S SUCCESSOR. RADIO ADDED THAT SECURITY SITUATION HAD IMPROVED AND THAT POLITICAL ACTIVITY INTENSIFYING TO COMPLETE ANOTHER STEP WITHIN CONTEXT OF SYRIAN INITIATIVE. APRIL 26 RADIO CITED KAMAL AS'AD'S STATEMENT THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD MEET SOON TO ELECT NEW PRESIDENT. RADIO ALSO REFERRED TO ARTICLE IN JERUSALEM AL-SHAAB WHICH DEPLORED JUMBLATT'S POSITION AND CHARACTERIZED HIM AS "FEUDALIST IN LEFTIST GARB."

3. PRESS REPORTING PAST TWO DAYS HAS FOCUSED ON HOPES FOR PROGRESS ON POLITICAL TRACK FOLLOWING SIGNING OF AMENDMENT. APRIL 25 TISHRIIN BANNERED: "AS'AD HAS OFFICIALLY RECEIVED AMENDMENT LAW. KARAME WELCOMES IT AND CALLS FOR RECONSTRUCTING NEW LEBANON." AL-THAWRAH HEADLINED: "FRANGIE SIGNED AMENDMENT BILL. ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT TO BE CONCLUDED WITHIN WEEK. RELAXATION OF SECURITY SITUATION COUPLED WITH NUMEROUS POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS." AL-BAATH CAPTION CLAIMED THAT "LEBANESE VIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AS STEP CONTRIBUTING TO PARTITION OF LEBANON." APRIL 26 AL-BAATH BANNERED: "SHARPNESS OF TENSION IN BEIRUT HAS DECREASED AND GENERAL SITUATION BECOMING CALM. WIDE-RANGING POLITICAL ACTIVITY FOR ELECTING NEW PRESIDENT. AS'AD HOLDS INTENSIFIED CONTACTS TO SET DATE OF ELECTION MEETING." APRIL 26 AL-BAATH REPORTED THAT KAMAL AS-AD SCHEDULED VISIT SYRIA TODAY AFTER MEETING WITH COLONELS KHULI AND MADANI AND BAATH LEADER QANSU YESTERDAY. PAPER ALSO NOTED CONTACTS AMONG LEBANESE DRUZE FACTION HEADED BY MAJID ARSLAN WHICH RESULTED IN STATEMENT AGAINST PARTITION AND AGAINST ANY IDEA OR MEASURE THAT WOULD LEAD TO DIVISION OF LEBANESE DISTRICTS, REFERENCE APPARENTLY TO JUMBLATT'S PROPOSAL FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN SOME LEBANESE DISTRICTS. AL-BAATH HIGHLIGHTED JERUSALEM AL-SHAAB'S DENUNCIATION OF JUMBLATT'S POSITION, CITING AL-SHAAB COMMENTARY THAT JUMBLATT "UNDERMINED TRUCE POSSIBILITIES TWO MONTHS AGO WHEN GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY AROSE TO SETTLE CRISIS," ADDING THAT "HE CONTINUES TO INFLAME SITUATION WITH HIS SPEECHES WHILE CREAM OF THE LEBANESE FALL ONE AFTER ANOTHER."

4. AL-BAATH CITED STATEMENT BY SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE IN BEIRUT DENYING NEWS OF ARRIVAL OF SAUDI FORMIN IN BEIRUT AND EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN SYRIAN INITIATIVE. PRESS REPRINTED UNCLASSIFIED

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TRANSLATION OF LE MONDE ARTICLE ASSERTING THAT IT WAS A CRIME TO PREVENT SYRIA FROM INTERVENING QUICKLY IN LEBANON, AND DEFENDING SYRIA FROM CHARGES OF OPPOSING LEBANESE LEFT. ARTICLE CONCLUDED THAT "SYRIA HAS UNDERSTOOD SOCIALISM WHICH IS WHY IT IS TRYING TO ASSIST THOSE UNJUSTLY TREATED."

5. SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH'S SERMON AS REPORTED IN PRESS TOUCHED UPON LEBANESE SITUATION, TERMING IT PLOT AGAINST PALEST-

INIANS AND ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY IN EQUAL PORTION TO CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM LEBANESE OFFICIALS. PATRIARCH PRAISED SYRIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS. APRIL 25 TELEVISION PRESENTED CLIP OF GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCH READING ESTER SERMON IN WHICH HE LAUDED SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN LEBANON.

6. IN STATEMENT TO AL-THAWRAH APRIL 25, PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN KHALID FAHUM AFFIRMED PALESTINIAN SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN INITIATIVE AND CRITICIZED EFFORTS TO DIVIDE LEBANON OR INTERNATIONALIZE SOLUTION OF CRISIS. HE CHARGED THAT U.S. WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH ELECTION YEAR POLITICS TO DETRIMENT OF ITS EFFORTS TO SETTLE ME CRISIS AND CONSEQUENTLY SOUGHT TO ENGAGE PALESTINIANS AND SYRIANS IN SIDE BATTLE IN LEBANON TO PREVENT THEM FROM ESCALATING THEIR OPPOSITION TO SINAI AGREEMENT AND STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY.

7. EDITORIAL COMMENTARY DISPLAYED SIGNS OF OPTIMISM OVER OPPORTUNITY FOR PROGRESS AFFORDED BY SIGNATURE OF AMENDMENT BUT WARNED AGAINST AMERICAN EFFORTS TO OBSTRUCT SETTLEMENT PROCESS. APRIL 25 AL-THAWRAH PROFESSED TO SEE "ENCOURAGING SIGNS ON ROAD TO SETTLING LEBANESE CRISIS." IT'S COLUMIST MAINTAINED THAT SYRIAN EFFORTS, WITH COOPERATION OF PALESTINIANS, HAD SUCCEEDED IN ACHIEVING TANGIBLE RESULTS. AL-BAATH NOTED THAT DESPITE SOME ESCALATION IN MILITARY OPERATIONS NOW AND THEN -- "A FACTOR WHICH CANNOT BE CONTROLLED COMPLETELY UNDER PREVAILING CONDITIONS FOLLOWING LONG YEAR OF BATTLES" --SIGNING OF AMENDMENT HAS REMOVED ANOTHER OBSTACLE FROM SETTLEMENT PATH AND HAS PAVED WAY FOR NEW PHASE OF POLITICAL EFFORTS. AL-BAATH CONDEMNED LOCAL ADMINISTRATION PROPOSAL "WHICH ONLY ENCOURAGES TREND TOWARD PARTITION."

8. TISHRIIN COLUMNIST DISCOURSED AT LENGTH ON AMERICAN ROLE IN UNCLASSIFIED

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LEBANON. ACCORDING TO TISHRIIN, "WHEN FIRE OF SEDITION IN LEBANON BROKE OUT NUMEROUS FINGERS WERE POINTING TO U.S. ROLE IN ITS PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ON BASIS THAT PLAN CONCEIVED TO DIVERT ARAB ATTENTION FROM SINAI AGREEMENT AND ITS DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS UPON ARAB SOLIDARITY. AMERICAN ROLE WAS CLEAR AND ACCUSING FINGERS WERE POINTING TO IT. THEN, THIS ROLE MOVED INTO DARKNESS TO HIDE BEHIND INTRICACY OF AFFAIRS AND NUMEROUS HANDS WHICH INVOLVED THEMSELVES KNOWINGLY OR UNKNOWNLY IN THEM, UNTIL TIME CAME WHEN PUBLIC BEGAN TO OVERLOOK AMERICAN ROLE AND DESIGNS. ARRIVAL OF AMERICAN ENVOY BROWN TO LEBANON, HOWEVER, AND HIS DECISION TO REMAIN THERE IN BACKGROUND DESPITE HIS GREAT ACTIVITY, AND NUMEROUS CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS WHICH WERE CAREFULLY STUDIED IN LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGY OF ARAB MASSES RETURNED AMERICAN ROLE BACK TO THE SURFACE OF LEBANESE EVENTS." TISHRIIN COLUMNIST WENT ON TO CHARGE U.S.

WITH PRACTICING NEW FORM OF IMPERIALISM IN WHICH IT USES ITS  
SURROGAES IN REGION TO CAUSE UNREST. HE ASSERTED THAT "IT IS IN  
THE INTEREST OF U.S. TO PREVENT SYRIAN, BY ALL POSSIBLE MEANS,  
FROM CONTINUNING ITS ROLE OF RESISTANCE TO GREAT IMPERIALIST  
POLOT AIMED AT AREA." HE CONCLUDED WITH CALL FOR ACTION BY ARABS  
TO ESTABLISH "ARAB FRON HOSTILE TO IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM TO  
RESIST SCHEME AIMED AGAINST US." SECOND TISHRIIN COLUMNIST  
ANALYZED THREE ESSENTIAL GOALS WHICH SHOULD BE PURSUED BY THOSE  
DESIRING RESOLUTION OF LEBANESE CRISIS: (1) PREVENTION OF  
PARTITION OF LEBANON, (2) PREVENTION OF IMPERIALIST ASSAULT  
INTO LEBANESE BODY POLITIC, AND (3) PRESERVATION OF LEBANESE  
NATIONALIST UNITY AND LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY.  
MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 APR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** buchant0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 30 AUG 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <30 AUG 2004 by cookms>; APPROVED <14 DEC 2004 by buchant0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** APRIL 25-26 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORTING ON LEBANON  
**TAGS:** PFOR, SY, LE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006